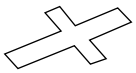
Name _____ Date _____ Class _____

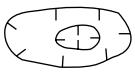
Topographic Maps

Understanding Main Ideas

Identify each of the symbols below by filling in the blanks.



1. _____

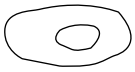


4. _____

2. _____

5. _____

3. _____



6. _____

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

7. How can index contours be identified?

8. You see that a USGS map of your area has a scale of 1 : 24,000. What does this tell you?

9. Can a contour line on a topographic map connect a point with an elevation of 100 feet to a point with an elevation of 110 feet? Explain why or why not.

10. On a topographic map, how would you show an island in the ocean with an elevation of 80 feet if the contour interval is 10 feet?

11. How could a person who snow skis or hikes use a topographic map?

Building Vocabulary

Fill in the blank to complete each statement.

12. The change in elevation from one contour line to the next is called the _____.

13. _____ are labeled with the elevation in round units.

14. A(n) _____ connects points of equal elevation on a topographic map.

15. A(n) _____ map shows the surface features of an area.

© Pearson Education, Inc., publishing as Pearson Prentice Hall. All rights reserved.

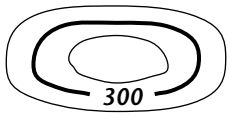
Name _____ Date _____ Class _____

Reading a Topographic Map

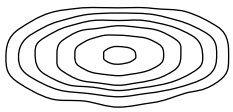
Reading and interpreting a topographic map takes practice. The more of these maps you examine, the better you'll become at figuring out what they show.

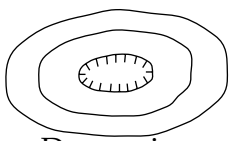
Rules for Reading Topographic Maps

1. All contour lines are drawn as seen from above.
2. The difference in elevation between one contour line and the next is always the same on a given map. This difference is the contour interval.
3. Elevations on one side of a contour line are higher than elevations on the other side of that line.
4. Contour lines never divide or cross another line, although on cliffs they appear to run together.
5. Contour lines never end in the middle of a map. They either form a closed loop or they run off the edge of the map.
6. Contour lines are farther apart on gentle slopes than they are on steep slopes.



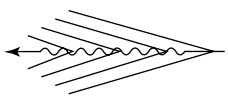
Elevation

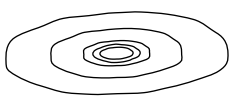

Hill

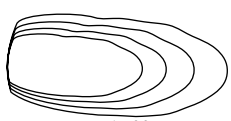

Depression

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. If you were making a topographic map, how would you show a steep cliff?
2. Why do you think gentle slopes are shown with more widely spaced lines than steep slopes are?
3. Why do you think one contour line never crosses another contour line?
4. On which map would contour lines probably be easier to read, a topographic map of a city or a topographic map of a wilderness area? Explain.
5. Imagine a place on Earth and make your own topographic map using the rules and symbols you've learned.


Stream


Gentle-to-steep elevation


Cliff

© Pearson Education, Inc., publishing as Pearson Prentice Hall. All rights reserved.